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ABSTRACT

This project involved a program for improving student behavior. The targeted population consisted of second and third grade students in a rural community located west of Chicago, Illinois. Data indicated that behavior problems were disrupting instructional time and students' involvement in learning. The evidence for the existence of the problem included referrals to the school counselor and/or school administrators, academic assessments, and teacher observations. Probable causes for the problems included increasing class size, overcrowded school facilities, changing family structure, and students' lack of appropriate social skills. The analysis of probable cause data suggested the need for a program that addressed social skill development to provide opportunities for students to improve their classroom behaviors. A review of suggested solution strategies resulted in the selection of a program to address social skill development through integrated thematic units and cooperative learning structures. The approach to improve students' behavior included four major concepts: creating an ongoing caring and peaceful environment in the classroom, creating and developing ongoing friendships, developing and enriching children's social skills through cooperative learning structures, and facilitating and enhancing student self-esteem and empathy towards others. The results of a post-implementation survey indicated that students gained positive feelings of self-esteem, and a decrease occurred in the use of verbal or physical aggression. (Appendices present data collection instruments. Contains 43 references.) (WJC)

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IMPROVING STUDENT BEHAVIOR

by

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and

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master's of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

Saint Xavier University & IRI/Skylight

Field Based Master's Program

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Abstract

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Title: Improving Student Behavior

This report describes a program for improving student behavior. The targeted population consists of second and third grade students. This population is a rural community located west of Chicago, Illinois. The area is becoming increasingly suburban. Data indicates that behavior problems disrupt instructional time and the students' involvement in learning. Evidence for the existence of the problem includes teacher journal entries, teacher observations, interviews with administration, teacher anecdotal records, teacher's survey, student's survey, observation of student checklists, and observation of student social skills.

Probable causes for the problem include: increasing class size, overcrowded school facilities, changing family structure, and student lack of appropriate social skills.

Solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others has resulted in the selection of a program to address social skill development through integrated thematic units and cooperative learning structures.

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Chapter 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of Problem

The students of the targeted second and third grade classrooms exhibit behavioral problems which disrupt instructional time and the students' involvement in learning. The evidence for the existence of the problem includes referrals to the school counselor and/or school administrators, academic assessments, and teacher observations.

Immediate Problem Context

The campus site includes one elementary building and one junior/senior high school building enrolling 2,191 students. The elementary building contains early childhood through sixth grade classes with a population of 1,251 students. The elementary school was originally built in 1976 as a middle school. The middle school was then converted into one large elementary school in 1984. The school presently contains a large media center, a gymnasium and gym deck, an art studio, and a computer lab. There are 54 classrooms for students from early childhood to sixth grade. The building is at

109 percent capacity with some students being housed in mobile units. (Superintendent, personal communication, February 6, 1995)

The elementary school staff consists of 76 certified teachers. Twenty-two of these teachers are support service teachers and 27 are noncertified personnel. Ten percent of the staff is male. Within the staff, 48.6 percent of the teachers have bachelor's degrees and 51.4 percent have a master's degree. The average teaching experience is 15.8 years and the average teacher's salary is $38,714 (School Report Card, 1994).

The racial/ethnic background of the students is 96.1 percent white, 0.9 percent black, 1.8 percent Mexican-American, 0.9 percent Asian, and 0.2 percent Native American. The students' attendance pattern is the highest in the county with 95.82 percent. The population is 100 percent bussed. Only 3.8 percent of the students receive free or reduced price lunches. The district spends $4,500 per pupil each year. The total budget for the district is $10,934,136 (School Report Card, 1994).

Classroom teachers work individually and in teams to teach language arts, math, science, health and safety, and social studies. Special teachers provide instruction in art, instrumental music, physical education, vocal music, media skills, computer literacy and application, challenging the gifted, and assisting the learning disabled.

A full-time principal, assistant principal, and three secretaries comprise the administrative staff. The full-time guidance counselor assists the classroom

teacher by teaching social skills lessons to individual classes and by counseling students who are referred for individual counseling. A full-time social worker, school nurse and school psychologist assist with referrals from classroom teachers regarding student's poor performance, academically and behaviorally.

Uniform guidelines are in place for the establishment of rules in the lunchroom, playground, and bus. These rules are communicated to the parents through a student handbook, a school calendar, and newsletters from teachers and administrators. Teachers and their students have the authority to establish specific rules pertaining to their classroom.

Classroom teachers handle their students disruptive behavior in his/her classroom. If student behavior is severe, the assistant principal may be asked to assist the teacher in seeking solutions to student's misconduct. Disruptive behavior and/or infractions of the rules of conduct on the bus or in the cafeteria are reported to the assistant principal. He will determine whether a report to parents or a suspension is necessary. The classroom teacher is usually not involved in these two areas.

A strong emphasis is placed on prevention of substance abuse through the drug awareness curriculum. Committees in curriculum, language arts, math, social studies and science are also in place to help to seek continuum and consistency in curriculum. These committees are comprised of one teacher from each grade level with one teacher elected chairperson. The

principal and assistant principal then oversee the progress of each committee and have final approval on all recommendations.

Community Setting

The targeted school is located approximately 60 miles west of a large metropolitan area. The school district includes children from four small communities encompassing 140 square miles. Historically the four small communities were considered a farming community. The rapid growth from the city caused these communities to change and become suburbs. Two of the four communities contribute 60 percent of the student population. The largest amount of growth is in these two communities. According to the Population and Household Forecasts For Northeastern Illinois Municipalities December 5, 1990, Community One had a population of 1,366 in 1980. The projected population for 2010 is 7,214. Community Two had a population of 1,224 in 1980 with a projected population for this community of 6,167 in 2010. The predominance of houses (83 percent) are owned rather than rented.

The range in single dwelling housing cost is between $80,000 - $500,000 with the median mortgage payment of $951.00 and rent median at $546.00 a month. The targeted communities are described as middle class communities. The United States Census Report (1991) states that the per capital income for the targeted community is $16,395 with a median family income of $45,637 per year. Rapid growth in housing is seen as the cause of the high increase in the school district's enrollment.

School district enrollment is growing at about 3 percent per year. No major industries are located in the four communities. The majority of the population (about 70 percent) is white collar. Government employs 10.3 percent of the adult population and farming is second at 7 percent. The rest of the employable population is divided among private industries. The unemployment rate is at 2.1 percent in the targeted communities. Eighty-five percent of the adult population are high school graduates; 12 percent of the population are college graduates (United States Census, 1990).

There is community support and pride in the school; the greatest problem facing the targeted communities is school district funding that has led to overcrowding. The school district has a tax cap that places it in the bottom third of the county in dollars per student. Due to this cap, the growth in enrollment has outpaced funding increases, causing overcrowding and budgetary cutbacks (Principal, personal communication, March 25, 1995).

Regional and National Context of Problem

One of the greatest problems facing all teachers is the problem of discipline. That statement is true for elementary teachers as well as secondary teachers. It is a concern for experienced and inexperienced teachers. This is not a new problem. Bennett and Rolheiser-Bennett (1992) suggested that classroom management has been a problem facing educators since the invention of classroom. They also stated that nearly every year, discipline tops the Gallup Poll's list of teacher's concerns.

What is the definition of a difficult student? Canter (1993, p. 4) stated that "difficult students may be disruptive, defiant, unmotivated, and demanding of attention. These students engage in disruptive, off-task behavior with great intensity and frequency." Regular classroom management techniques are not effective with these students.

Interruptions due to behavior problems take away from valuable class instructional time. In a study identifying and designating "more effective" schools and "less effective" schools, Berliner and Casanova (1993, p. 155) reported that the number of interruptions during instructional time was distinguished between the two kinds of schools. The classrooms in schools identified as more effective classrooms had a minimal number of interruptions. Also, when they did occur, these interruptions were effectively handled. In the classrooms of schools identified as less effective schools, the interruptions were greater in number and less effectively handled.

Albert (1989) suggested that there are three basic concepts of behavior. Concept 1: Students choose their behavior. Many psychologists have suggested that behavior is based on a child's heredity or environment. Albert maintained that these factors cannot be changed by the classroom teacher. Albert instead, focused on the concept that students do have a choice regarding their behavior.

Concept 2: The ultimate goal of student behavior is to fulfill the need to belong. Albert (1989) believed that students need to: feel capable of

completing school tasks satisfactorily, believe they can connect with students and classmates, and to know they contribute significantly to the group.

Concept 3: Students misbehave to achieve one of the four immediate goals. Albert (1989) maintained that misbehavior is a students attempt to receive immediate gratification. Albert suggested that this immediate gratification is usually linked to one of the following four goals: 1) Attention - Some students misbehave by distracting the teachers and other students to gain extra attention. 2) Power - Some students misbehave in order to gain power. Their behavior indicates their urge to disrupt the established classroom rules and order. 3) Revenge - Some students misbehave to "get even". Teachers and other classmates may be the target of the attempted revenge.4) Avoidance of failure - Some students misbehave to avoid repeated failure. In order to compensate for this, the students choose withdrawal behavior which make them appear inadequate or disabled.

Chapter 2

PROBLEM EVIDENCE AND PROBABLE CAUSE

Both subjective and objective means were used to document the evidence of student disruptive behavior. A letter (see Appendix A) was sent to fellow second and third grade teachers as well as a survey questionnaire (see Appendix B) in regards to teacher perceptions of children's social skills.

The 12 completed teacher surveys indicated the existence of student disruptive behavior. The responses in Figure 1 of "a significant amount", "several", or "a few" were tabulated to indicate that 74 percent of the responding teachers felt that the students in their classroom exhibited low self-esteem. Responses of "hardly any" were interpreted to indicate very little evidence of concern. Ninety-one percent of the respondents indicated that students have difficulty working in groups. In addition, all of these same respondents indicated that students do not think before they act. Do discipline problems interfere with teachers job performance? Again, all of the respondents agreed that discipline problems do interfere with their job of

teaching. On the positive side, all of the respondents indicated their belief that parents are supportive of classroom management and rules.

Response: Number/Percentage		Significant	Several	Few	Hardly Any
1.	Do you have students who do not have respect for, or a favorable impression of themselves?	1	1	7	3
		8%	8%	58%	25%
2.	How many students have difficulty working in groups?	1	3	7	1
		8%	25%	58%	8%
3.	How many students are verbally abusive to others?	0	1	4	7
		0%	8%	33%	58%
4.	How many students are physically aggressive toward others?	0	1	4	7
		0%	8%	33%	58%
5.	How many students show little or no respect for other children?	0	1	6	5
		0%	8%	50%	42%
6.	How many students show little or no respect for adults?	0	1	2	9
		0%	8%	17%	75%
7.	How many students do not think before they act?	2	8	2	0
		17%	66%	17%	0%
8.	How many parents are supportive of your classroom management and rules?	10	2	0	0
		83%	17%	0%	0%
9.	Do you think discipline problems interfere with you performing your job each day?	0	6	6	0
		0%	50%	50%	0%
10.	Do you refer students to the principals or to the guidance counselor due to their disruptive behavior?	0	1	7	4
		0%	8%	58%	33%
11.	How many times do you feel that you must cope with behavior problems without adequate levels of support services?	1	2	7	2
		8%	17%	58%	17%
12.	Do you experience more disruptive classroom behavior in your class now than you did five years ago?	0	6	6	0
		0%	50%	50%	0%
13.	Have you ever seriously considered leaving teaching because of students misbehavior?	0	1	5	6
		0%	8%	42%	50%
14.	How do you rate the types of discipline problems in your class?	0	0	8	4
		0%	0%	67%	33%
Number = 12 teachers – The average years of teaching experience is 19.					

Figure 1
Number of Teacher Responses in Each Category on Teacher Survey
September, 1995

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A letter was sent to parents asking for the consent that their child could take a questionnaire as part of a research study. After the parent's consent was received a student questionnaire (see Appendix D) was administered to 52 second or third grade students. The results of this survey are illustrated in Figure 2. The responses of "always" and "most of the time" indicated strong evidence of a positive nature. The responses of "sometimes" and "never" indicated evidence of a less than positive nature.

Figure 2 displays individual responses to the student survey questions shown in Appendix D. Questions one through four dealt with the topic of self-esteem. Questions five through eight dealt with social skills. Questions nine through twelve dealt with feelings toward school.

The results of the self-esteem section on the student survey indicated that the students's feelings of self-esteem are generally positive. The next section relating to social skills contained some mixed results. The student responses dealing with getting along with others and working in cooperative groups were positive in nature. The seventh question comparing the behavior of students at school to their behavior at home could indicate that the question was not specific enough in relation to the other questions on the survey. The final section of the survey indicated a positive feeling of the students toward school and their teachers. Questions eleven and twelve give some evidence of behavior problems in the classroom.

Response: Number/Percentage	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never
1. Do you like yourself?	26	14	12	0
	50%	27%	23%	0%
2. Do you have a friend?	29	14	10	0
	56%	27%	19%	0%
3. Do you know how to be a friend to others?	27	14	9	2
	52%	27%	17%	4%
4. Do you believe that you are loved by your family?	40	9	3	0
	77%	17%	6%	0%
5. Do you get along with your classmates?	20	20	10	2
	38%	38%	19%	4%
6. Do you like working in a co-operative group?	29	14	6	3
	56%	27%	12%	6%
7. Do you think you behave in the same way at home as you do at school?	16	14	12	11
	31%	27%	23%	21%
8. Do you sometimes have to fight (hit or yell) to settle your differences?	2	3	20	27
	4%	6%	38%	52%
9. Do you like school this year?	27	17	6	2
	52%	33%	12%	4%
10. Do you like your teacher this year?	44	4	3	1
	85%	8%	6%	2%
11. Are other students in this classroom mean or unkind to you?	5	4	24	19
	10%	8%	46%	37%
12. Are you unkind or mean to other students in this classroom?	4	0	7	41
	8%	0%	13%	79%
Number of students = 52				

Figure 2
Number of Student Responses in Each Category on Student Survey
September, 1995

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As expected, the results of the student survey offered some differing results from that of the teacher survey. This could be attributed to the fact that primary grade students have not had a great deal of experience in self-evaluation. They may not be able to recognize that their social skills do need improvement. They may not be able to understand the effect of their feelings of self-esteem and their feelings toward school on their classroom behavior.

Teacher observations were also used as an additional method to collect data. These tallies and anecdotal comments (see Appendix E) confirmed the need to address students's disruptive behavior. Figure 3 illustrates the tallied number of disruptive behaviors observed in the targeted second grade class recorded over a week long period. Figure 4 displays the tallied number of disruptive behavior observed in the targeted third grade class over a week long period. In general, these tallies and anecdotal comments confirmed the need for interventions to develop, foster, and enrich the students's self-esteem, cooperative learning strategies, and social skills in order to decrease the disruptive behavior by students.

OBSERVED STUDENT BEHAVIORS	30 minutes math lesson	30 minutes reading lesson	30 minutes science lesson	30 minutes social studies lesson
Talks out of turn	6	4	7	5
Off task	5	2	6	3
Disturbs others	4	2	5	2
Leaves seat without permission	2	3	3	3
Runs in room or hallways	2	1	0	2
Pushes while in line in room or hallways	1	0	1	0
Makes fun of others	2	2	0	2
Name calling	1	2	0	1
Talks back to teacher(s)	0	0	0	0
Hurts others physically	0	1	0	0
Lies	1	0	0	0
Steals/damages property	1	0	0	1
Total Number of Observed Disruptions	**25**	**17**	**24**	**19**

Figure 3

Results of Four Observations of Student Behaviors

in the Targeted Second Grade

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OBSERVED STUDENT BEHAVIORS	40 minutes language arts class	40 minutes art class	40 minutes science class	40 minutes math class
Talks out of turn	10	7	12	8
Off task	15	18	13	11
Disturbs others	8	14	10	10
Leaves seat without permission	4	9	6	5
Runs in room or hallways	1	4	0	3
Pushes while in line in room or hallways	0	1	0	2
Makes fun of others	2	3	1	4
Name calling	1	0	2	4
Talks back to teacher(s)	0	4	1	2
Hurts others physically	0	1	2	0
Lies	0	2	1	0
Steals/damages property	0	0	4	1
Total Number of Observed	**41**	**63**	**52**	**50**

Figure 4

Results of Four Observations of Student Behaviors

in the Targeted Third Grade

Another method used to document student disruptive behavior was a social skills check list and anecdotal journal (see Appendix F). The emphasis

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of this was that of a positive nature. One or two targeted social skills were the focus of a classroom observation. Each time a student was observed "using" the targeted social skills, a tally mark was made. An observation was made before the social skills were formally taught. Then another observation was made after the students had several days to "practice using" the social skill.

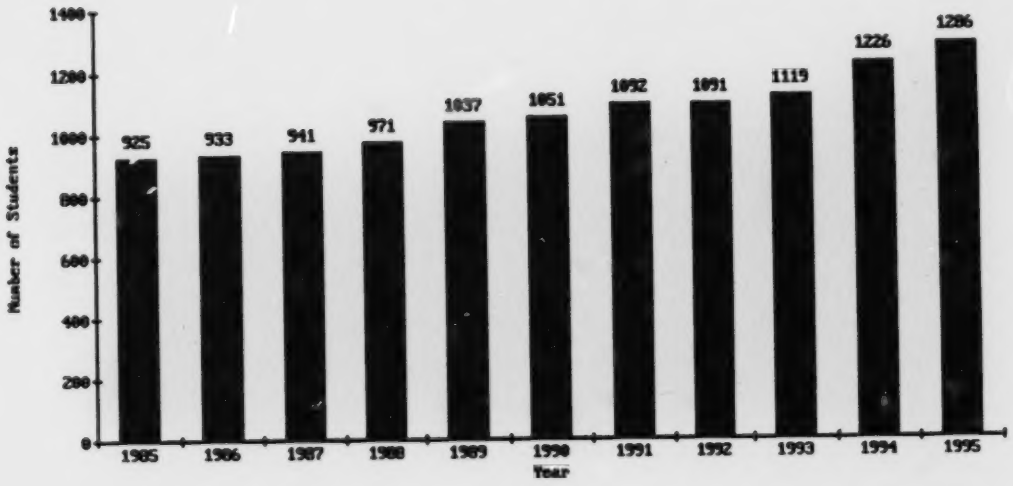
Probable Causes - Sitebased

As stated in Chapter One, the targeted school is overcrowded. It is currently at 109 percent capacity. Four classes are currently housed in mobile units. The rise in the school's population is evident in Table 1.

Table 1

Total School Enrollment

1985 to 1995



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The gain in the number of students from 1987 to 1988 was thirty. The gain in students from 1988 to 1989 was sixty. Another dramatic rise in students was observed from the year 1990 to the year 1991. This time over 40 new students enrolled in the targeted elementary school.

The final two years in Table 1, 1994 and 1995, continued to show a large increase in the number of enrolled students. In 1994 over 100 new students entered the targeted school. In 1995 that number rose by another 60 new students.

This steadily increasing number of new students impacted the targeted school's facilities. The lunchroom and the recess playground area became greatly affected by the overcrowded number of students using these facilities.

Interviews of one school administrator and one school counselor (see Appendix G) gave further confirmation of the existence of disruptive behavior by students. The administrator and counselor both agreed that the overcrowded lunchroom and recess facilities increased the amount of disruptive student behavior in the targeted school.

The school administrator reported that at least one hour of her working day is spent dealing with student behavior problems. She stated that the majority of these problems are occurring in the lunchroom or recess facilities.

The school counselor estimated that 20 to 25 percent of her day is spent dealing with student disruptive behavior. She also agreed that the majority of behavior problems are linked to the lunchroom and recess facilities.

Both professionals were asked if they believed that the inappropriate behavior of students had any impact on students' learning. The administrator and counselor both replied affirmatively. The counselor added that the affect of this problem varies according to the ability of the students involved. She stated that this is a very serious threat to many students's learning.

Probable Causes - A Review of the Literature

Teachers at all levels have reported a continuing increase in bickering, fighting, teasing, name-calling, and other acts of unkindness (Kreidler, 1994). Kain, Downs, and Black (1988) agree as they report that social skills are the life tools that are necessary to exist in society. The social skills of behavior are acquired ones. They first must be taught, then learned, and finally mastered.

As stated previously in Chapter One, Albert (1989) maintained that another reason why students misbehave is in attempt to receive immediate gratification. Albert also suggested that this immediate need for gratification could be linked to one of four goals.

The first goal is attention. Some students misbehavior is caused by students striving for attention by distracting and disrupting the teacher and other students.

The second goal is power. Some students misbehavior is caused by students seeking power. Their behavior disrupts classroom rules and order.

The third goal is revenge. These students vent their frustrations by trying to "get even." Teachers and students are often the intended targets of the attempted revenge.

The fourth and final goal is the avoidance of failure. Some students misbehave in order to avoid repeated failure. These students may lack confidence. They may also become so discouraged that these students withdraw and give up completely.

School counselors, Mehaffey and Sandburg (1992), report that students are often referred to them for services due to the fact that they lack the self-esteem needed to successfully and positively interact with their peers. The students display a lack of ability to engage in playground activities. They are unable to work in cooperative groups in the classroom. This results in an inability to seek attention in positive ways.

Glasser (cited in Burke, 1992) offers further insight into the relationship between poor self-esteem and behavior problems in the following:

> All our lives we search for ways to satisfy our needs for love, belonging, caring, sharing and cooperation. If a student feels no sense of belonging in school, no sense of being involved in caring and concern, that child will pay little attention to academic subjects. Instead he, or she will engage in a desperate search for friendship, for acceptance. The child may become a behavioral problem, in the hope of attracting attention. (p. xv)

No one has felt the impact of family disruption more than schools. Whitehead (cited in Lickona, 1988) reported that principals from schools across the nation are reporting a sharp increase in aggressive, acting-out behavior in boys living with a single parent. Teachers are finding that many of their students are struggling to concentrate on their school work due to the powerfully emotional conflicts in their family lives. In addition, the rate of children living in poverty, is higher in the United States than any other fully developed industrial nation on earth (Moseley, 1993).

It is not just the decline of the family that can be blamed for students' misbehavior. Many people feel that society in general is in decline. Bennings (1988) and also Wynne (1988) have stated concern for rising rates in such things as juvenile crime, teenage pregnancy, drug use, and suicide.

Lickona (1988) found that:

> a hostile moral environment is taking a toll on youth character. This can be found in ten troubling trends: rising youth violence, increasing youth violence; increasing dishonesty (lying, cheating, and stealing); growing disrespect for authority; peer cruelty; a resurgence of bigotry on school campuses from preschool through higher education; a decline in the work ethic; sexual precocity; a growing self-centeredness and declining civic responsibility; an increase in self-destructive behavior; and ethical illiteracy. (p. 420)

Recent studies dealing with the need to improve students' behavior indicate that traditionally discipline programs have mandated that adults must monitor student behavior and arbitrate any minor conflicts. More serious behavior problems might require the school principal's intervention to help resolve the problem. These behavior conflicts occur frequently and consume a considerable amount of valuable teacher and administrator time (Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, & Burnett, 1992).

Johnson (Johnson et. al., 1992) additionally suggests that such discipline programs send the message to students that authority figures are needed and must be present to resolve conflicts. These programs are successful only when the students are under the watchful attention of the authority figure. This strategy does not empower the students. Burke (1992) concurs that students' behavior should not be motivated by a fear of punishment. "The days of the strict school teacher carrying the big stick are over." (Burke, 1992, p. xxv).

Therefore, the evidence suggests that the following causes are the major reasons for student's disruptive behavior:

1. the increasing class sizes at the targeted school
2. overcrowded school facilities such as the lunchroom and playground
3. the lack of student's appropriate social skills
4. student's need for immediate gratification
5. the lack of student's self-esteem
6. changes in the traditional family structure

7. the decline of a moral society

8. student's lack of responsibility for their own behavior

Chapter 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Review of the Literature

Various trends in education have come and gone. Experienced teachers have watched the "education pendulum" swing one way and then a few years later swing back the other way. Out of the countless, current educational buzz words ". . . teachers today know that the bottom line in teaching is effective classroom management." (Burke, 1992, p. 170)

The research by Walberg and Karweit (cited in Burke, 1992) indicated that although each school's schedule varies, 50% or less of the school day is actually used for academic instruction. That research clearly indicates that a great deal of time is indeed being spent on classroom management. What solutions can be found in the literature to address the problems of classroom behavior?

The literature suggests that in the past, classroom management programs have heavily relied on adults monitoring students' behavior. This approach did not empower students. Such programs as Assertive Discipline,

Reality Therapy, and Teacher Effectiveness Training offered methods for dealing with threats to classroom order. However, Emmer and Ausikker (cited in Evertson & Harris, 1992) stated that none of those programs adequately provided preventative and supportive methods required for effective management and discipline.

Contrasting discipline programs encourage students to take more responsibility for their own behavior by taking an active role in classroom governance. Students are encouraged to participate in the development of class rules. Students also are encouraged to work with the teacher to develop solutions to classroom discipline problems (Schaps & Solomon, 1990).

Curwin and Mendler (1988) concurred and suggested that education move from the traditional "Obedience Model" to the "Responsibility Model." The responsibility model of teaching emphasizes the idea that good behavior become internalized. Students learn to treat others respectfully because it is the right thing to do - not just because the teacher enforces it as a class rule (Burke, 1992). The model empowers the students.

It is a tremendous benefit to the teacher when students assume more responsibility for their own behavior. Then teachers can ideally concentrate on classroom instruction, rather than classroom control (Johnson et al., 1992). Society also benefits from greater student ownership in responsibility. The importance of this responsibility according to Pereira (1988) is:

> . . . not only for personal growth and development, but also for the welfare of society. In an increasingly interdependent society, each of us must realize our obligations and responsibilities, both to ourselves and others. (p. 430)

Another tool suggested from the literature that can be used as part of an effective solution to students' misbehavior is the teaching of social skills. These social skills need to be taught, learned and then mastered in the schools from early childhood programs all the way through high school. Bellanca (1991) stated that early childhood programs should heavily emphasize social skill instruction. He also stated that the following primary years are an excellent time for students to foster the foundation of social skills. The emphasis on social skills should not stop there, but should continue all the way on through high school.

Burke (1992) agreed when stating that unless teachers take a short time to re-educate students with positive social skills, a great amount of time will be spend redirecting and disciplining students during the entire school year. Another positive benefit to both teachers and students is that the "improved social skills enable more on-task, on focus, concentrated student effort" (Bellanca & Fogarty, 1991, p. 50).

Mastering social skills also offer several beneficial long-term outcomes to students. Johnson and Johnson (1990) believe social skills have a direct correlation to building and maintaining positive relationships with peers,

parents, and spouses. They also maintain that an adult quality of life depends on successfully mastered social skills. The researchers also add that more socially skilled people tend to be more psychologically healthy.

Research of the literature also suggests that the teaching of social skills has an enormous impact on the use of cooperative learning in the classroom. Burke (1992) affirms that shortcuts cannot be taken in setting up a cooperative classroom. If time is not spent teaching social skills to students, cooperative activities are doomed to failure. Johnson and Johnson (1990) confirmed that social skills must be taught to students. Without the development of social skills in students, many benefits of cooperative learning are lost.

Cooperative learning plays an important role in the improving of students' behavior. Leming (1993) stated that a cooperative learning environment has resulted in positive social values and behavior. More evidence for this was documented by Slavin (1987). He confirmed that students learned to get along better with peers from other ethnic groups and races, demonstrated greater mutual concern for each other, showed more acceptance of mainstreamed students in the regular classroom, and engaged in prosocial behavior.

Cooperative learning's benefits are far-reaching. Johnson and Johnson (1990) report that when teachers use cooperative learning, students learn a feeling of interdependence. Within cooperative groups students learn to care about their peers. The researchers state that cooperative learning also

promotes better social skills, more social support, and even higher self-esteem. Schools in today's society, expect more and more from teachers and students. The Johnson brothers also report that when there is a stronger increase in pressure on students, there should be more social support at the same time as well. Cooperative offers a great deal of that needed social support.

The benefits from cooperative learning extend past high school into the real life work force. Johnson and Johnson (1990) suggest that employers value such interpersonal skills as responsibility, verbal communication, leadership, and cooperation. The researchers offer these findings from a survey of businesses, labor unions, and educational institutions:

> As many as 90% of the respondents who had been fired from their jobs were fired for poor job attitudes, poor interpersonal relationships, and inappropriate behavior. Being fired for lack of basic skills and technical skills was infrequent. Even in high-tech jobs, the ability to work effectively with other personnel is essential . . . . (p. 53)

Very few people today disagree with the belief that there has been a real decline in the American family as well as society in general. This decline has meant that many of the children today lack close, stable, and caring relationships with adults. Schaps and Solomon (1990) suggest that it is up to schools to become like a supportive family and a caring community.

There is a great deal of support for this idea in the literature. Research has indicated that there is a real connection between a caring environment and

a child's positive self-esteem. Borba and Borba (1982) state that children begin to develop their self-image at a very young age. Teachers (and parents) can encourage children to feel secure and comfortable by creating caring environments. The authors suggest that environments which are the most effective in improving and increasing children's self-esteem are those in which:

1. Children feel an atmosphere of caring and love;
2. Children feel secure enough to try new things without the worry of failure;
3. Children are respected as individuals;
4. Children's creativity is encouraged;
5. Children feel comfortable when expressing their own opinions;
6. Children are aware of clearly defined boundaries and limits within the environment;
7. Rules and standards are consistently enforced.
8. Children have the chance to find success at their appropriate level.

There is also a connection between a caring environment and students' acceptance of greater responsibility. "If the classroom climate is conducive to personal growth and development, students will be more likely to take responsibility for their actions - regardless of the lives outside school" (Burke, 1992, p. xxv).

The teacher's role in establishing a positive and caring classroom climate begins with the teacher modeling positive encouragement to the

students. The teacher also incorporates that positive encouragement into the social skills that are taught. Purkey (as cited in Burke, 1992) believes that students' learning achievement is directly correlated to their feelings of self-esteem. All of these elements again greatly impact the positive behavior of students.

A final solution documented by research suggests that "literature has long been accepted as a way to help children confront problems and cope in this complex world" (Dow & Slaughter, 1989, p. 25). Wynne (1988) also suggested exposing students to literature that investigates or implies traits associated with good character. The use of literature focuses on such themes as: caring, sharing, cooperation, feelings, self-esteem and conflict management. Some of the strategies for using literature in the classroom include role playing, creative dramatics, class discussions, journal writing, and illustrations of problems and solutions.

Project Outcomes

The analysis of the probable cause data discussed previously suggests the need for a program to address social skill development to provide opportunities for students to improve their classroom behaviors. Therefore:

> As a result of implementing social skills strategies during the period beginning September, 1995 and extending through January, 1996, the targeted second and third grade students will improve their classroom behaviors, as evidenced by teacher observations, teacher anecdotal journals, and checklists tallying student behaviors.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following process objectives define the major strategic procedures proposed for problem resolution.

1. As a result of implementation of thematic units, occurring from September, 1995 and extending through January, 1996, the targeted second and third grade students will improve positive self-concept and friendship skills.
2. As a result of curriculum development and implementation, the targeted second and third grade students will improve their classroom behaviors through the use of literature at a minimum of two times per week.
3. As a result of curriculum development and implementation, the targeted second and third grade students will improve their social skills through cooperative learning structures.

Solution Components

The elements of the approach used to improve student behavior fell into these four major concepts: a) creating an ongoing caring, and peaceful environment in the classroom, b) creating and developing ongoing friendships, c) developing and enriching children's social skills through cooperative learning structures, and

d) facilitating and enhancing student self-esteem and empathy toward others. Integration between and among the major concepts is desired and will provide the teachers with a more flexible program. These interventions will allow

students to develop skills to decrease the behaviors that disrupt instructional time and therefore increase the student involvement in learning.

Action Plan for Implementing The Solution Strategies

Description of Problem Resolution Activities

This action plan was designed to address the four major solution concepts: creating an ongoing, caring, and peaceful environment in the classroom, creating and developing ongoing friendships, developing and enriching children's social skills through cooperative learning structures, and facilitating and enhancing student self-esteem and empathy toward others. The action plan has a series of thematic units under which suggested lessons, social skills and cooperative learning structures, literature, writing activities, art projects and dramatics can be integrated to improve student behavior. These thematic units and lessons will be implemented twice weekly for twenty to thirty minutes each.

The implementation plan is presented in outline and in chronological order allowing for the overlapping of strategies and activities. This is a general outline of the proposed lesson plans. The lessons may be adjusted and adapted according to class time and constraints. The parents of the targeted students were contacted through a letter (see Appendix C) before the implementation of this action plan.

Action Plan Outline

September

I. Activities

A. Send a letter of welcome to new students and their parents.
B. Introduce - The Caring Environment Through the Year
   1. The Caring Tree
   2. The Marble Jar
   3. The Pickle Jar
   4. Puzzle Pieces
   5. Person of the Week
   6. Mail Call
C. Establish Classroom Procedures - Student Involvement
   1. Create a class compact
   2. Establish a time for a class meeting
   3. Establish a Goal of the Week
D. Art Projects/Bulletin Board Ideas
   1. What Can You Do With a Name? (art project)
   2. "Hello" (bulletin board)
   3. Autograph Shirt Party

II. Stress the Social Skills

A. Raising your hand to speak
B. Taking turns

III. Literature - Possible books related to "A Caring Environment"

A. Brown, Margaret Wise. Dr. Squash The Doll Doctor
B. Fleischman, Sid. The Scarebird
C. Grimm, Jacob. The Golden Goose
D. Hasler, Eveline. Martin is Our Friend
E. Lipkins, William. The Magic Feather Duster
F. Munsch, Robert. David's Father
G. Suess, Dr. Horton Hears A Who!
H. Shibano, Tamizo. The Old Man Who Made a Tree Bloom
I. Stevens, Carla. Stories from a Snowy Meadow
J. Wells, H. G. The Adventures of Tommy
K. Wilde, Oscar. The Selfish Giant
L. Wittmann, Sally. The Boy who Hated Valentine's Day
M. Zolotow, Charlotte. I Know a Lady

IV. Evaluation

A. Rubric given to students to self-evaluate their kindness to others
B. Report card of kind deeds

V. Thematic Unit - Caring Environment

VI. Topics for Discussion and/or Journal Entries

A. Rules I think are important
B. What I want to be as a student
C. The perfect classroom

Self-Esteem

October

I. Activities
A. All About Me
1. The Way I Like To Print My Name
2. My Favorite Things
3. My Special Feelings
4. Concept Circles
5. I'm Proud
6. Stamp Collecting
B. I Like My Friends and My Friends Like Me
1. Smiles Class Chart
2. Friendly Book Report
3. Class Adventure Chains
4. Kid's Checklist of Kindness
5. Friendship Mix
6. Circle of Friendship
7. Family Coat of Arms
8. Family Triaramas
9. Can Do Can
10. I'm "Thumbs" Body
11. Lifting Spirits
12. "Warm Fuzzy"
13. What Would You Do?
14. Empathy - "How It Feels Tales"
15. Empathy - Allsburg, Chris Van. Two Bad Ants (art project)

II. Stress the Social Skills

A. Attentive Listening
B. Using a six inch voice to speak

III. Literature - Possible books related to self-esteem

A. Appell, Clara. Now I Have A Daddy Haircut
B. Bach, Alice. Warren Weasel's Worse Than Measles
C. Bahr, Amy C. It's O.K. To Say No
D. Blume, Judy. The One In The Middle Is The Green Kangaroo
E. Bolliger, Max. The Rabbit With The Sky Blue Ears
F. Brown, Anthony. Willy The Wimp
G. Carle, Eric. The Mixed-Up Chameleon
H. Carlson, Nancy. I Like Me
I. Keats, Ezra Jack. Peter's Chair
J. Leaf, Munro. Noodle
K. Sharmat, Marjorie Weinman. I'm Terrific Taking Care Of Melvin
L. Tigerington, Jeanne. Big World, Little World
M. Waber, Bernard. You Look Ridiculous

IV. Evaluation

A. Worksheet "How good am I?"

V. Thematic Unit

A. Facilitating and enhancing students self-esteem and empathy towards others

VI. Topics for Discussion and/or Journal Entries

A. Rules I think are important
B. What I want to be as a student
C. The perfect classroom

Making Brand New Friends

November

I. Activities

1. From "me to we" (lesson and art project)
2. Me-We

3. Golden Rule (lesson and art project)
4. Comparison of Cooperative, Competitive and Individual Learning
5. Jigsaw
6. Things That Bug Me (vocabulary activity, art project, venn diagram)
7. Me Vest (art project)
8. Getting Acquainted, Borba p. 19
9. Sunflowers, Borba p. 33-34 (lesson and art project)
10. Happy Thoughts, Borba p. 15
11. Friendly Silhouettes, Borba p. 34
12. Find Out About Each Other Interview

II. Stress the Social Skills

A. Treat others with respect
B. Use kind words

III. Literature - Possible books related to friendship

A. Adler, David A. My Dog and the Birthday Mystery
B. Alderridge, Josephine Haskell. The Best Of Friends
C. Aliki, Overnight at Mary Bloom's; We are Best Friends
D. Anglund, Joan Walsh. Cowboys and His Friends
E. Baylor, Byrd. Guess Who My Favorite Person Is
F. Berenstain, Stan. The Berenstain Bear's Moving Day
G. Bonsall, Crosby Newell. It's Mine! A Greedy Book
H. Brigg, Raymond. The Snowman
I. Buck, Pearl. The Little Fox In The Middle
J. Bunting, Eve. Clancy's Coat
K. Carle, Eric. Do You Want To Be My Friend?
L. Clifton, Lucille. Everett Anderson's Friend; My Friend Jacob
M. DePaola, Tomie. Andy (That's My Name)
N. Hoff, Syn. Who Will Be My Friend?

IV. Evaluation

A. The Friendship rating

V. Thematic Unit

A. Creating and developing ongoing friendships

VI. Topics for Discussion and/or Journal Entries

A. Friendship Tree
B. Memories
C. Rainy Days Problems
D. I Never Would
E. I Never Would, But

Feelings

December

I. Activities

A. Empathy
   1. Empathy - "How It Feels Tales" (lesson)
   2. Empathy - Two Bad Ants By Chris Van Allsburg (lesson, art project)
   3. Empathy - Stepping into another person's shoes (discussion, art project, journal entry)

B. No more put downs
   1. Put downs
      a. discussions, role playing, journal writing
   2. The Put Down Way vs. The Peaceable Way
      a. art activities, role playing, journal writing, bulletin board
   3. "You Message"
   4. 100 Hundred Things To Be Happy About (on going activity)
   5. Valentines
   6. The Caring Classroom

II. Stress Social Skills

A. No Put Downs
B. Be Positive

III. Literature - Possible books related to feeling

A. Allinger, Richard. Feelings
B. Bach, Alice. The Day After Christmas
C. Berger, Terry. I Have Feelings
D. Brenner, Barbara. Faces, Faces, Faces
E. Calhoun, Mary. The Witch Who Lost Her Shadow
F. Dragonwagon, Crescent. Rainy Day Together
G. Hazen, Barbara Shook. Happy, Sad, Silly, Mad

H. Helena, Ann. The Lie
I. Krauss, Ruth. The Bundle Book
J. Lalli, Judy. Feeling Alphabet
K. Mayer, Mercer. Mine
L. Stanton, Elizabeth. Sometimes I Like To Cry
M. Waber, Bernard. Ira Says Goodbye

IV. Evaluation

A. Rubric - How do you feel?

V. Thematic Units: Facilitating students empathy towards others

VI. Topics for discussion and/or journal entries

A. Feelings
B. Friendly feelings
C. A word on feelings
D. Feelings to find
E. Friendship Tree
F. Looking Ahead

Resolving Conflicts Peaceably

January

I. Activities

A. S.T.P. - introduce the program
B. How To Cope (worksheet for discussion)
C. Problem Solving Borba, Chapter 7, p. 115-130
D. Pantomime Borba, p. 118
E. Phone Problems Borba, p. 118
F. Small group problem solving Borba, p. 122
G. Problem Pictures Blueprints p. 126-127
H. Create a Peaceable Super Hero
I. Make "Tools of Conflict Resolution"
J. Art Project - Make posters showing conflict resolution skills
K. Make a video showing conflict resolutions
L. Write a poem about resolving problems
M. Show the art print - The Peaceable Kingdom by: Edward Hicks
   1. discussion, art project
N. The Put Down Way vs. The Peaceable Way (lesson)
O. Code Of Conduct (discussion)

P. C.R.I.D.A.R. (a program to resolve conflicts)
Q. Positive Discipline
R. Second Grade Constitution
S. Reinforcing Positive Interaction in the classroom

II. Stress the Social Skills
A. cooperation
B. encouragement of others

III. Literature

1. Berry, Joy Wilt. Fighting
2. Bonsall, Crosby, Newell. Who's a pest?
3. Brandenberg, Franz. It's not my fault
4. Hoban, Russell. The sorely trying day
5. Holabird, Katherine. Alexander and the dragon
6. Lionni, Leo. It's Mine
7. Minarik, Else Holmelund. No Fighting, No Biting
8. Sharmat, Marjorie Weinman. I'm not Oscar's friend
9. Slobodkin, Louis. Hustle and Bustle
10. Stevenson, James. Are we almost there?
11. Winthrop, Elizabeth. That's mine
12. Zolotow, Charlotte. The quarreling book; The unfriendly book

IV. Evaluation

A. No Put Down Report Card

V. Thematic Unit

A. Developing ways to resolve conflicts

VI. Topics for discussion and/or journal entries

A. When I get angry
B. I'm Mad at you
C. What is compromise?
D. Let's get along

Methods of Assessment

Several data collection methods will be used in order to assess the effects of these interventions. The action plan will be evaluated in February, 1996. The methods of assessment will be ongoing and authentic in nature. They will include behavior monitoring observation checklists, social skills monitoring observation checklists, and teacher anecdotal journals.

Chapter 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of Intervention

The purpose of this project was to reduce behavioral problems in the targeted second and third grade classrooms. The behavioral problems were disrupting student instructional time and student involvement in learning.

The approach to improve student's behavior included four major concepts: creating an ongoing caring and peaceful environment in the classroom, creating and developing ongoing friendships, developing and enriching children's social skills through cooperative learning structures, and facilitating and enhancing student self-esteem and empathy towards others. These components were taught in a sixteen week time frame in the targeted second and third grade classrooms.

Teacher input through the use of a survey (Appendix D) was sought. Results established and validated the need for the project. The process began with a recognition of the need for positive self awareness through a student pre-project survey. After analyzing the collective data it was decided what plan

of action would be followed. During the months of September to January, the action plan called for lessons and projects stressing the two social skills of the month. September's social skills were remembering to raise your hand to speak and also to take turns. Lessons that month revolved around those skills. Each lesson was presented with a piece of literature that dealt with the month's social skill theme. Discussion in cooperative groups and then the large group followed. The areas of the curriculum were integrated into subject areas. Other topics chosen were self-esteem, making brand new friends, feelings, and resolving conflicts peaceably.

The first concept of creating an ongoing caring classroom was implemented by employing a positive motivator. A "good deed tree", where students did good deeds to others was established. A "marble jar" enabled the whole class to be rewarded for following rules and saving class time. Also, students wrote their names, decorated individual puzzle pieces, and then joined them to the others to form a complete class and puzzle.

Thematic units on friendship were introduced. Students were shown ways to develop and maintain friendships with their classmates. The classroom teachers encouraged their students to accept others and to see common interests in fellow students. One way this goal was accomplished was by having students interview their fellow classmates, followed up by taking them to another classroom and introducing them to other students. Students also role played ways to ask fellow classmates to play at recess. Students

switched journals and wrote to other students, In addition, stories were read and discussions were held on the topic of friendship. Students chose classmate's names and wrote acrostics about that student.

Cooperative learning structures were employed to help teach social skills to the second and third grade students. Time was taken at the start of each cooperative group lesson to teach the social skills of each month. Cooperative learning was begun the second week of school. Three to four students were assigned to a group. Students changed groups often, creating flexible groups.

Each month the action plan focused on a thematic unit that included a variety of lessons, social skills, literature, writing activities, art projects, and dramatics integrated to improve student behavior. The cooperative learning structures were applied whenever it fit the lesson presented. These thematic units and lessons were implemented twice weekly for twenty to thirty minutes each. One month into the intervention, it became apparent that this restricted time element was insufficient to accomplish the goals to the degree it had been intended. Modification in the original plan would be necessary. A change was then made to teach three lessons a week for twenty minutes each. Observation of the second grade groups in October led the teacher to conclude that the student skills development was preceding on schedule. Observation by the third grade teacher concluded that she had a more immature group that would require additional skill practice.

The school guidance counselor presented two lessons to the targeted classes. The first was entitled "The Warm Fuzzy-Cold Prickles Lesson." This lesson dealt with a lesson on individual feelings. A basket of fuzzy balls were presented and students were reminded of how they feel when other people say kind words or do good deeds for them. One of the fuzzy balls was placed on their clothing. The guidance counselor then presented a basket of prickles (styrofoam balls with tooth picks stuck in them). Students were reminded of how it feels when unkind remarks are made. Prickles were placed on students' clothes. The counselor explained that prickles are like remarks that stick with us and affect our day and our reactions to others. The classroom teacher then made a poster asking the students the question, "Are you going to give out warm fuzzies or cold prickles today?" It will remain on the wall the rest of the year as a reminder to students to respect the feelings of others.

Another lesson that was presented was entitled the "S.T.P. lesson." "S" represents stay calm, "T" represents think, and "P" represents practice. Students were encouraged to use this procedure whenever possible to settle conflicts peacefully. A large poster was displayed in the classroom with the letters "S.T.P." as a reminder of what each letter represents and the procedure to follow when a student was bothered by another. The first step of the procedure instructed the student to ignore the "bothering student." Step two instructed the student to move away. Step three instructed the student to

firmly tell the other student to "Stop!" The final step involved telling an adult about the problem.

Teacher observations indicated that students became more adept at recognizing objectionable behavior and dealing with this behavior after the teaching of these concepts. Empathy was also at its highest after the introduction of the Warm Fuzzy-Cold Prickles lesson. This was evident in student conversations with teachers and classmates as well as in journal writing done by students. During recess, some students were observed using the S.T.P. procedure to solve problems peacefully without requiring teacher intervention. Teacher observation gave evidence of students making more friendly and kind overtures to one another. The teachers also noted that students need to be provided with many opportunities to practice the application of these skills since the concept of resolving conflicts peacefully was new to many of the students.

Presentation and Analysis of the Results

The results of a student post-implementation survey was compared to the pre-implementation survey in Figure 5. Questions one through four dealt with the topic of self-esteem. Both sets of results showed that the targeted students had positive feelings of self-esteem. Evidence of positive growth was noted in the majority of categories in the first three questions. Questions five, six, nine, and ten dealt with the student's feelings toward their classmates, teacher, and school. There was also positive growth evident in the "always"

and "most of the time" categories. This was most notably seen in question number five. There was a 20 percent increase in these two categories from September to January. A comparison of the pre-intervention and post-intervention results from questions eight, eleven and twelve indicated a decrease in the use of student verbal or physical aggression.

Response: Number/Percentage	Always		Most of the time		Sometimes		Never	
	Sept.	Jan.	Sept.	Jan.	Sept.	Jan.	Sept.	Jan.
1. Do you like yourself?	26	33	14	18	12	1	0	0
	50%	63%	27%	35%	23%	2%	0%	0%
2. Do you have a friend?	29	35	14	15	10	2	0	0
	56%	67%	27%	29%	19%	4%	0%	0%
3. Do you know how to be a friend to others?	27	30	14	18	9	4	2	0
	52%	58%	27%	35%	17%	7%	4%	0%
4. Do you believe that you are loved by your family?	40	41	9	8	3	3	0	0
	77%	79%	17%	15%	6%	6%	0%	0%
5. Do you get along with your classmates?	20	28	20	22	10	2	2	0
	38%	54%	38%	42%	19%	4%	4%	0%
6. Do you like working in a co-operative group?	29	33	14	16	6	2	3	1
	56%	63%	27%	31%	12%	4%	6%	2%
7. Do you think you behave in the same way at home as you do at school?	16	14	14	14	12	14	11	11
	31%	27%	27%	27%	23%	27%	21%	21%
8. Do you sometimes have to fight (hit or yell) to settle your differences?	2	2	3	3	20	10	27	37
	4%	4%	6%	6%	38%	19%	52%	71%
9. Do you like school this year?	27	31	17	18	6	2	2	1
	52%	60%	33%	34%	12%	4%	4%	2%
10. Do you like your teacher this year?	44	45	4	4	3	1	1	1
	85%	88%	8%	8%	6%	2%	2%	2%
11. Are other students in this classroom mean or unkind to you?	5	2	4	2	24	28	19	20
	10%	4%	8%	4%	46%	54%	37%	38%
12. Are you unkind or mean to other students in this classroom?	4	0	0	0	7	9	41	43
	8%	0%	0%	0%	13%	17%	79%	83%
Number of students = 52 from second and third grade								

Figure 5
A Comparison of the
Number of Student Responses in Each Category on Student Survey
February, 1996

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Figures 6 and 7 provide a visual representation of the monthly tallies of discipline incidents observed in the two targeted classrooms. Again, a decrease in discipline incidents was noted in the majority of categories. The interventions appear to have had a positive effect on all of the targeted behaviors.

OBSERVED STUDENT BEHAVIORS	Total				
	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.
Talks out of turn	22	14	8	8	6
Off task	16	13	10	9	7
Disturbs others	13	10	5	4	4
Leaves seat without permission	11	8	7	5	2
Runs in room or hallways	5	3	2	2	2
Pushes while in line in room or hallways	2	1	0	1	0
Makes fun of others	6	5	3	3	2
Name calling	4	4	2	3	2
Talks back to teacher(s)	0	0	1	1	0
Hurts others physically	1	1	0	0	0
Lies	1	0	0	1	0
Steals/damages property	1	2	1	1	0

Figure 6
Results of Cumulative Monthly Observations of
Student Behavior in the Targeted Second Grade

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It was noted in Figure 6 that the largest number of discipline incidents in the second grade classroom occurred when students "talked out of turn". There was a 73 percent decrease in this category from September to January. The next largest number of discipline incidents occurred when students were "off task". This category also noted a sizeable decrease of 56 percent during the course of the intervention.

OBSERVED STUDENT BEHAVIORS	Total				
	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.
Talks out of turn	37	25	15	9	7
Off task	57	48	37	25	15
Disturbs others	42	31	21	16	8
Leaves seat without permission	24	14	8	6	4
Runs in room or hallways	8	6	6	5	3
Pushes while in line in room or hallways	3	2	2	1	1
Makes fun of others	10	8	6	3	2
Name calling	7	5	5	4	3
Talks back to teacher(s)	7	4	3	3	1
Hurts others physically	3	2	0	0	1
Lies	3	3	1	1	0
Steals/damages property	5	2	0	1	0

Figure 7
Results of Cumulative Monthly Observations of
Student Behavior in the Targeted Third Grade

Figure 7 documented that the largest number of the discipline incidents in the third grade classroom occurred when students were "off task". There was a 74 percent decrease in this category from September to January. The next largest number of discipline incidents occurred when students "disturbed others". There was a very significant decrease of 71 percent in this category during the course of the intervention.

Teacher journal entries also offered documentation of the improving student behavior. The second grade teacher recorded in September the highest number of tallies in her observations of students talking out of turn. This teacher's journal entry in October noted a decrease in the incidents of students' talking out of turn. The final entry in January noted a substantial decrease in the students talking out of turn from September to January.

The September journal entries from the third grade teacher noted a strong concern for the large number of tallied incidences of students disturbing others. By November, this number had decreased by 50 percent. The number continued to decrease another 30 percent by the end of the intervention in January.

The second grade teacher and the third grade teacher noted in several journal entries that they attributed the significant decrease in the targeted behaviors to the teaching and practicing of monthly planned social skills. A comparison of several entries from each teacher found that there was a wide difference between the needs of the two teachers. The second grade teacher

noted that this current class came into second grade with some of the social skills already internalized. However, this teacher still noted many benefits of reviewing and practicing "mastered" skills along with the teaching and practicing of "new" social skills.

The third grade teacher's anecdotal records describe a very different type of students than the ones previously described. This teacher wrote about a very immature group of third graders with very few internalized social skills. Her journal noted that many more repeated teachings and times to practice the social skills were needed.

Both teachers shared an interest in documenting the number of times that a targeted social skill was observed being "used" by a student before the social skill was taught and practiced. The teachers also wanted to tally and compare the number of times this same skill was observed being used by a student after the social skill was taught and practiced. Figure 8 presents these data aggregated by the month.

September's Social Skills		October's Social Skills		November's Social Skills		December's Social Skills		January's Social Skills	
1. Raise hands before speaking		1. Attentive listening		1. Treat others respectfully		1. No put downs		1. Cooperate with others	
2. Taking turns		2. Use a 6 in. voice		2. Using kind words		2. Be positive		2. Be encouraging	
Pre	**Post**	**Pre**	**Post**	**Pre**	**Post**	**Pre**	**Post**	**Pre**	**Post**
15	20	14	21	7	18	4	13	3	16

Targeted Second Grade

September's Social Skills		October's Social Skills		November's Social Skills		December's Social Skills		January's Social Skills	
1. Raise hands before speaking		1. Attentive listening		1. Treat others respectfully		1. No put downs		1. Cooperate with others	
2. Taking turns		2. Use a 6 in. voice		2. Using kind words		2. Be positive		2. Be encouraging	
Pre	**Post**	**Pre**	**Post**	**Pre**	**Post**	**Pre**	**Post**	**Pre**	**Post**
6	15	5	17	5	14	3	13	6	18

Figure 8
A Comparison of the Observed Pre-Intervention and
Post-Intervention Social Skills
Targeted Third Grade

It was noted that the category of "attentive listening" showed an increase of 33 percent in the second grade classroom and 71 percent in the third grade classroom. There was also a significant increase in both classrooms in January's category of "cooperating" and "encouraging". There was an increase

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of 81 percent in the second grade classroom and 67% in the third grade classroom.

Conclusions and Recommendations

At the completion date of this project, the student survey (Appendix D) was again given to the students. The data gathered from this survey and the observations of the teachers involved in the project indicated that the number of classroom disruptions had decreased while student involvement in learning had increased. The final survey also showed that most students had gained a greater understanding of their feelings and a greater sense of empathy for their fellow students.

Final recommendations from the researchers suggest that the interventions become a part of the yearly curriculum. The targeted topic was believed to be relevant to student needs. The time table for this project was judged to be adequate in meeting the set goals. Informal remarks by students about the lessons and projects were judged to be favorable. Students also commented that they enjoyed working together in cooperative groups. The cooperative groups were felt to be productive by teachers working on the project. Students also showed steady progress in applying social skills that were presented.

The final determination from the researchers is that this project become part of the yearly curriculum. The researchers had been concerned before going into the intervention that parents might object to time being spent away

from the teaching of the basic skills. These concerns were unfounded as many parents voiced very favorable comments throughout the intervention.

The writers of this paper believe that the teaching of social skills is a prerequisite to any other type of teaching. If time is not taken to teach these valuable skills, all teaching and student management will be more difficult and much more time consuming. More importantly, students are happier. They feel safer in their school environment. They are more able to settle differences with other students.

The writers of this project also found that since students had been taught strategies to settle their differences, teachers were asked to intervene less often. These writers suggest that the targeted classrooms had become more caring places for students and teachers to work and learn.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

This survey is being conducted by Sue Hasenauer and Margo Herrmann. We are in the Field-Based Masters Program at St. Xavier's University. The focus of our study is behavior problems which disrupt instructional time and also the students' involvement in learning. The information you provide will remain completely anonymous. Thank you for taking the time to complete the attached survey. Please return it to one of our mail boxes in the office by the end of this week.

Sue Hasenauer

Margo Herrmann

Appendix B

TEACHER SURVEY

Please rate the following questions by circling the appropriate answer based on your experience with your current class.

1. Do you have students who do not have respect for, or a favorable impression of themselves?

   A significant amount Several A few Hardly any

2. How many students have difficulty working in groups?

   A significant amount Several A few Hardly any

3. How many students are verbally abusive to others?

   A significant amount Several A few Hardly any

4. How many students are physically aggressive towards others?

   A significant amount Several A few Hardly any

5. How many students show little or no respect for other children?

   A significant amount Several A few Hardly any

6. How many students show little or no respect for adults?

   A significant amount Several A few Hardly any

7. How many students do not think before they act?

   A significant amount Several A few Hardly any

(please turn over)

8. How many parents are supportive of your classroom management and rules?

A significant amount Several A few Hardly any

9. Do you think discipline problems interfere with you performing your job each day?

A large amount of the time Several times A few times Not at all

10. Do you refer students to the principals or to the guidance counselor due to their disruptive behavior?

A large amount of the time Several times A few times Not at all

11. How many times do you feel that you must cope with behavior problems without adequate levels of support services?

A large amount of the time Several times A few times Not at all

12. Do you experience more disruptive classroom behavior in your class now than you did five years ago?

Yes, I experience a great deal more now. Yes, I experience some more now. No, I do not experience any more now. I haven't taught that long yet.

13. Have you ever seriously considered leaving teaching because of student misbehavior?

Yes, many times Yes, several times Yes, a few times No, I haven't

14. How do you rate the types of discipline problems in your class?

Many are serious Several are serious A few are serious None are serious

How many years experience do you have in teaching? _____ years

Thank you again for your help!
Sue and Margo

Appendix C

Saint Xavier University

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

A Caring Classroom - Improving Student Behavior

This research project is being conducted by Susan Hasenauer and Margo Herrmann. Its purpose is to improve student behavior and to create a more caring classroom for our students. Students will not be graded in any way. Their responses to any survey will be completely anonymous. Should you have any questions about your student's participation in this program, please feel free to call or visit me at the school. If you are comfortable with your child's participation, please sign the consent form below and return it to me at the school.

I, the parent/legal guardian of the minor named below, acknowledge that the project's purposes have been explained to me, and any question I have about the program and my child's participation can be addressed by contacting the school. I voluntarily consent to my child's participation, and I understand that any information collected during the program will be completely anonymous.

_____
(Name of Minor Participant)

_____ _____
(Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian) Date

Appendix D

STUDENT SURVEY

FEELINGS ABOUT MYSELF

1.	Do you like yourself?	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never
2.	Do you have a friend?	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never
3.	Do you know how to be a friend to others?	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never
4.	Do you believe that you are loved by your family?	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never

FEELINGS ABOUT MY CLASSMATES

5.	Do you get along with your classmates?	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never
6.	Do you like working in a co-operative group?	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never
7.	Do you think you behave in the same way at home as you do at school?	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never
8.	Do you sometimes have to fight (hit or yell) to settle your differences?	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never

(please turn over)

FEELINGS TOWARD SCHOOL

9.	Do you like school this year?	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never
10.	Do you like your teacher this year?	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never
11.	Are other students in this classroom mean or unkind to you?	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never
12.	Are you unkind or mean to other students in this classroom?	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never

Appendix E

Behavior Monitoring Observation Sheet
and
Anecdotal Journal

Class: _____ Observation Began at: _____

Date: _____ Observation Ended at: _____

Activity Observed: _____ Name of Observer: _____

OBSERVED STUDENT BEHAVIORS	(√) TALLY WHEN OBSERVED	NUMBER OF TALLIES
Talks out of turn		
Off task		
Disturbs others		
Leaves seat without permission		
Runs in room or hallways		
Pushes while in line in room or hallways		
Makes fun of others		
Name calling		
Talks back to teacher(s)		
Hurts others physically		
Lies		
Steals/damages property		
Total Number of Observed Disruptions		

Observer's Comments: (Use the back, if necessary)

_____

_____

_____

Appendix F

Social Skills Monitoring Observation Sheet
and
Anecdotal Journal

Class: _____ Observation Began at: _____

Date: _____ Observation Ended at: _____

Activity Observed: _____ Name of Observer: _____

Mrs. _____'s _____ grade class list	**Which Social Skill? (√) TALLY WHEN OBSERVED**	**Which Social Skill? NUMBER OF TALLIES**
Total Number of Tallies		

Observer's Comments: (Use the back, if necessary)

_____

_____

Appendix G

INTERVIEW - SCHOOL COUNSELOR/ADMINISTRATOR

Name _____

Years of experience_____

Date _____

Please answer based upon your experiences in this school.

1. On the average, how many students are referred to you daily for behavior problems?

2. What types of student behavior problems are referred to your office?

3. Are there one or two behavior problems that seem to be the most prevalent?

4. Who refers the discipline problems to you?

(please turn over)

5. What is your estimate of the amount of time per day that you spend on discipline-related matters?

6. Do most of the student behavior problems occur "in class" or "out of class"? If "out of class" where do they occur?

7. Do you think inappropriate behavior of students hinders the learning process at this school? If so, how serious is this problem?

8. Do you experience more or less discipline referrals than you did five years ago? Any ideas why?

Margo Herrmann
Sue Hasenauer

Possible Causes of Disruptive Behavior Problems

Causes	How Documented
1. Increasing Class Sizes	Office reports from Kaneland
2. Overcrowding in the school	Office enrollment figures from Kaneland
3. Inadequate support from administrators	Teacher survey
4. Changes in traditional family structure	Professional literature (Lickona, 1993)
5. Lack of student's appropriate skills	Teacher survey and professional literature (Bellanca and Fogarty, 1991)
6. Poor problem-solving techniques of students	Professional literature (Bellanca and Fogarty, 1991)